

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 22, 2019

Mr. Lance M. Fritz
Chairman, President and CEO
Union Pacific Corporation
1400 Douglas Street
Omaha, NE 68179

Dear Mr. Fritz,

We write to express our serious concerns with Union Pacific Railroad's (UPRR) recent layoffs of nearly 200 people and facility disinvestments. These UPRR decisions to reduce jobs at Hinkle Yard, and close the Hinkle Supply Warehouse and Mechanical Locomotive Shop in Hermiston, Oregon will devastate this rural community by hamstringing the economic opportunities and stability of the entire region. And they could create potential safety risks for the remaining employees.

Since 1951, Hinkle Locomotive and Service Repair Facility has served the locomotive scheduled maintenance service and repair needs of UPRR's Pacific Northwest corridor. While we understand that affected employees among the potentially 195 positions to be eliminated have the right to bid and bump to other rail yards, the potential outmigration of much needed family-wage jobs in rural Eastern Oregon will do serious long-term damage to the local economy and local tax base.

Earlier layoffs have already hurt rural agricultural producers and other shippers. Those shippers rely heavily on the UPRR to move goods to market, and they have reported to us difficulties reaching Union Pacific staff to resolve problems, or even reach a customer service representative.

There are other likely troubling impacts from these UPRR decisions. Its failure to work with Oregon shippers could drive more transportation to already congested freeways and undermine Oregon's transportation infrastructure investments. And given that interstate loads of hazardous materials continue to travel through rural Oregon communities often during dangerous weather conditions, closing the Hinkle Mechanical Locomotive Shop would reduce oversight and inspection and increase safety risks.

In order to better understand the impacts of these workforce and facility disinvestments, we ask that UPRR answer the following questions:

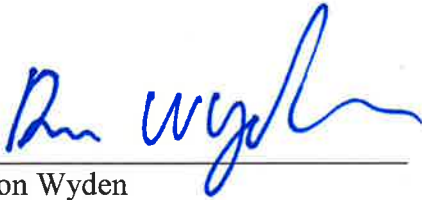
- How many workers of each classification have been laid off or forced to relocate, by Oregon county or facility? Please include train service, car and locomotive repair and maintenance, signal and track.
- How many of these workers were hired in the last three years?

- What investments has UPRR made in Oregon facilities in the last seven years? Have any of these investments been made at the Hinkle Yard?
- In the months since layoffs first started in October, has the Federal Rail Administration reviewed workers' safety concerns at Hinkle and other Oregon facilities?

As UPRR adopts the Precision Scheduled Railroading model to reduce operating ratios, cutting rural workforce and facilities, there are many cautionary tales where this strategy has not performed well over the long term. We are deeply concerned about rural Oregon economies and your company's actions as it appears to risk destabilizing already fragile communities. While the company has substantial resources to reinvest and modify operations over time, many of these workers and their families are not so fortunate.

We will look forward to your response to our questions and concerns.

Sincerely,



Ron Wyden
United States Senator



Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator